



NEWS

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CHP ISSUES STATEWIDE SEAT BELT ALERT

SACRAMENTO - To underscore the message that seat belts save lives, California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers statewide plan a one-day campaign to focus their attention on people who do not buckle up when riding in a vehicle. March 31, 2009, has been designated by the CHP as a "Vehicle Occupant Restraint Day."

"The goal of this campaign is to stress that seat belts save lives," said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. "More than 30 percent of all vehicle passengers killed statewide in 2007 and 2008 were not buckled up at the time of the collision. We hope people will learn from it and take the extra seconds to put on their seat belt or properly restrain their child. There's no do over for someone killed because they failed to buckle up."

CHP officers on grant-funded overtime, provided by the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), will take to the road specifically looking for violations of seat belt and child safety restraint laws.

According to OTS, seat belt usage by California motorists is at a record high 95.7 percent. One of the CHP's primary goals is to raise that number even higher, an effort that will require the public's cooperation.

In 2008, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) issued 204,187 citations to drivers and passengers who failed to buckle up. That figure does not include the 17,076 tickets issued for child safety seat violations. California law requires children younger than age 6 or weighing less than 60 pounds to be properly secured in the back seat. Free child safety seat inspections and installation is provided at CHP offices throughout the state.

"We all need to have reminders," said Commissioner Farrow. "By having the black-and-whites out on the road, we want to educate the public to remind them to wear their seat belts. We all get a little careless sometimes, but in this case, carelessness can be deadly."

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